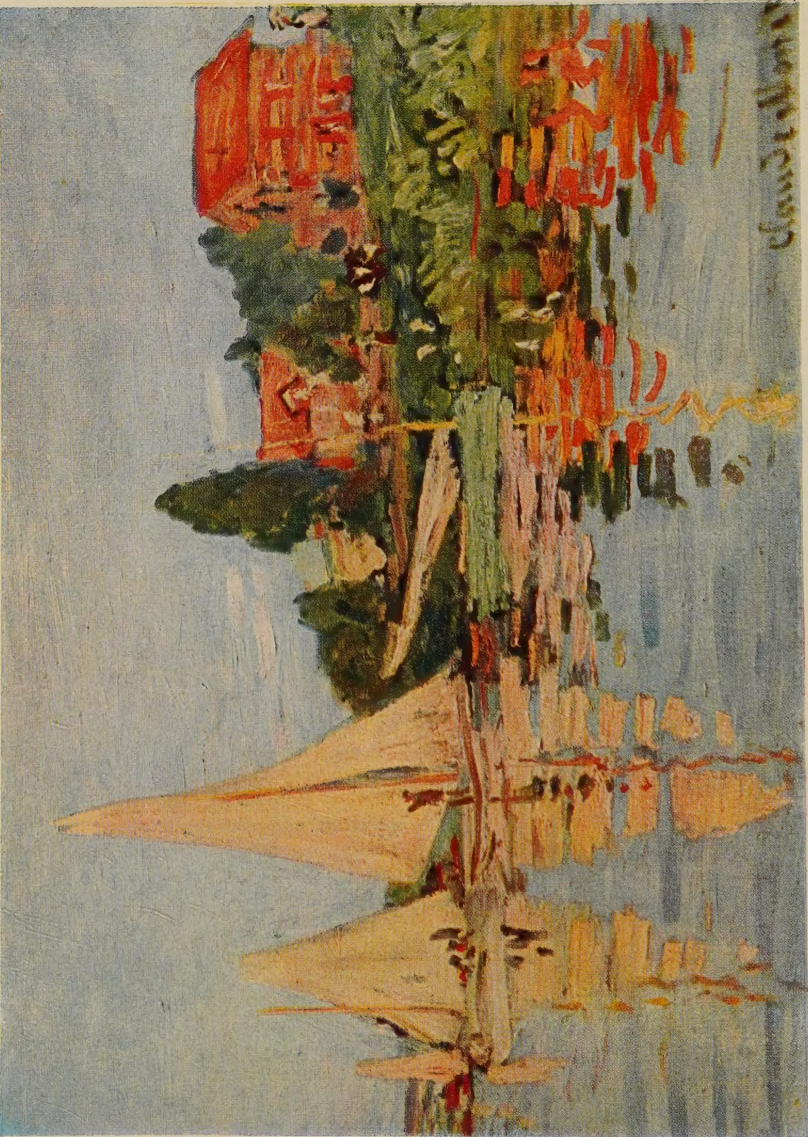


MONET



HYPÉRION

MONET



REGATTA AT ARGENTEUIL. Detail. 1874. Louvre, Paris

HYPERION MINIATURES

MONET

BY

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SKETCHES OF CHILDREN. (Pastel)
Durand-Ruel Collection, Paris

CLAUDE MONET

Born in Paris, November 14, 1840. Died at Giverny, December 5, 1926.

CLAUDE Monet was perhaps the most purely Impressionist painter in the group of Impressionists, for his entire contribution was devoted to

imitating the passing effects of sunlight and the reflections upon water. The human figure very rarely appears in his pictures. He began his career by exhibiting caricatures for sale in the window of a bookshop in Le Havre, where they were noticed by Boudin who, twelve years earlier, had been a bookseller in the same town. It was Boudin who first introduced the young man to landscape painting by taking him to paint outdoor subjects on the spot, and in 1856 they had an exhibition together in Rouen. In the following year Monet went to Paris and studied at the Académie Suisse, where he met Pissarro. Monet's family were middle-class people, his father being a grocer. They did not at all welcome the idea of his becoming a painter and even offered to pay for a substitute to take up his military service if he would consent to abandon his career, but he preferred to stick to painting and enlisted in a regiment stationed in Algeria. After two years, however, army life began to affect his health, the family capitulated, and Monet left his regiment to return to Paris, where he became a student in the studio of an academic artist, Marc-Gabriel Gleyre. Here he met and made friends with three other students: Renoir, Bazille, and Sisley. He also continued to attend the Académie Suisse to draw from the figure, and met Cézanne, who had been a student there for the past year. Thus, except for Degas, the whole of the group later to be known as the Impressionists were collected together. The artists were all young, eager and full of enthusiasm. All were determined to realize their ideal as painters, but as yet they were uncertain what procedure to adopt. Above all, they had no suspicion that in ten years time they would be the principal figures in a first-class scandal, the leaders of a revolution which none of them appear to have desired, even although they had already begun to realize that official art was not what they needed.

In 1863, Monet was profoundly impressed by an exhibition of fourteen canvases by Manet at Martinet's gallery, on the Boulevard des Italiens. It was the first sign of what was to come, and another sign, perhaps, was the expedition which he made with Bazille, Sisley, and Renoir in the spring of the same year to paint landscape scenes in the forest of Fontainebleau.

The first picture which Monet sent to the Salon was accepted in 1865, and in the years that followed other works by him were admitted, but with increasing difficulty as his individuality became more definite. At this period he painted a number of pictures containing figures. First, a large composition, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, of which there remains an exceedingly interesting sketch—the picture itself he destroyed after Courbet had criticized it adversely. Then came *Lady in a Green Dress*, which received many favourable notices in the Salon of 1886, *Women in the Garden*, and *Luncheon in an Interior*. These, together with one or two portraits which he executed at different periods, represent the entire range of his figure paintings.



IMPRESSION. 1872. Marmottan Museum



SPRING, 1886
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore



LE DEJEUNER SUR L'HERBE. 1840.
Durand-Ruel Collection, Paris



TULIP FIELD IN HOLLAND. Detail
Louvre, Paris



WINDMILLS IN HOLLAND. 1871
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore



QUARRIES, SAINT-DENIS. 1872
Louvre, Paris



THE PORT OF HONFLEUR. 1866



SAINT LAZARE STATION
M. A. Ryerson Collection

This does not mean that he was either insensitive or uninterested, he probably felt more at ease with neutral themes such as landscape. In portrait painting, especially where a conscientious artist is concerned—and like all the Impressionists, Monet was exceedingly conscientious—there are psychological as well as purely pictorial problems to be dealt with. They can be disregarded but it is like cheating to do so, and for the Impressionists, the pictorial problem was so important in itself that they felt unwilling to complicate it still further. It was hard enough for them to find their proper



BRIDGE OVER THE SEINE AT ARGENTEUIL. Detail
Neue Staatsgalerie, Munich





THE TURKEYS, 1877
Louvre, Paris

means of expression, and harder still to persuade the public to accept it, without making the situation any more difficult.

You may argue that the human figure is prominent in the work of certain Impressionists, for example Degas, Renoir, and Cézanne. But these three



WOMEN IN THE GARDEN. 1867
Louvre, Paris



PORTRAIT OF MADAME G. 1868
Private Collection



MADAME MONET AND CHILD. 1875
Edwin S. Webster Collection

artists are precisely those whose technique is furthest from Impressionism, properly so-called. Many critics have wished to exclude them from the Movement on the ground that their painting and aesthetic is bound to it by only the thinnest convention.

However that may be, Monet henceforth devoted himself almost entirely to painting landscape, and especially scenes showing a stretch of water. For

several years he found an inexhaustible supply of subjects in the Channel ports, by the banks of the Seine, and later in England, Holland, and Venice. These pictures are young and vital. They are sensitive records of the charm of the different seasons, full of gaiety and luminosity, yet they roused a storm of protest and hatred that lasted for many years and which condemned to a life of poverty a group of men whose only wish was to portray the effects of light in nature. However, after years of stubborn endeavour, the unbelievers were converted and towards 1880 Claude Monet was able to perceive a lull in the attacks. His difficulties gradually diminished, he became comfortably off, then almost rich, and at the end of his long life he found himself famous.

But he was not allowed to enjoy his fame in tranquillity for, unlike Sisley who died too young to witness his own triumph, Monet died too late. He lived to see Impressionism the victim of fresh attacks, not this time from the protectors of academic art, but from newcomers who used the freedom won for them by Impressionism to react against it and to try other roads leading to fresh audacities and new ideas.

It would be underestimating Monet to think of him simply as a sincere and sensitive interpreter of landscape scenes. He was more than that. There is a train of thought, a thread of real and most characteristic poetry running through his work, and it is to no happy accident, as he himself pointed out, that we owe the various series recording the changing effects of light on the same subject at different seasons and at different hours of the same day. Among the best known of these series are some haystacks in a field, a group of poplars by the river Epte, and Rouen Cathedral. Art lovers who have had an opportunity of seeing a collection of several such pictures by Monet will have realized the extraordinary charm and interest of comparing them. Monet wished to demonstrate that because of the effect of the atmosphere there is no such thing as absolute colour in nature, that the appearance of each object is constantly changing, and that the art of the painter lies in seizing the passing moment and fixing it in a more permanent image. His experiment was completely successful; even without it Impressionism would have been fully justified. But in addition, these pictures form successions of harmonies of magical colour that recall some of the most successful variations on a theme in music.

Another series is *The Water-lilies* (*Les Nymphéas*), culminating in the fine set of decorative panels which Claude Monet offered to the nation shortly before his death, and which were placed a few years later in the Musée de l'Orangerie at the Tuileries. In these panels, the subject, *Lily pads on the Water*, is no more than a pretext on which Monet based a harmony of colour so subtle that he was able to suppress all forms, leaving only an atmosphere, as impalpable as a mirage, or a vision of fairyland.



CLAUDE MONET, SELF PORTRAIT. 1886
Louvre, Paris



PORTRAIT OF JEAN-PIERRE AS A CHILD. 1878
Private Collection



MONSIEUR PAUL, PROPRIETOR OF THE PATISSERIE AT
[24] POURVILLE. 1882. Private Collection



MADAME PAUL, PROPRIETRESS OF THE PATISSERIE AT
POURVILLE. 1882. Private Collection



JAPANESE GIRL. 1876
Duveen Collection, New York



BOUQUET OF PEONIES. 1887
Rodin Museum, Paris



THE BRIDGE OF DOLCE ACQUA. 1884
Private Collection



THE HUNT. 1870
Louvre, Paris



TULIPS. (Decorative panel)
Private Collection



WHITE AZALEAS. (Decorative panel)
Private Collection



BELLE-ILE. 1886



THE CLIFF. 1884



THE ORANGES. 1890
Private Collection



THE POPLARS. 1891
Private Collection, U. S. A.



ANTIBES. 1888
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



WATERLOO BRIDGE, 1902
Denver Art Museum, U. S. A.



THE PALACE OF THE DOGES AT VENICE 1968
Brooklyn Museum, U. S. A.



WESTMINSTER BRIDGE IN LONDON. 1909



WATER-LILY POND. 1899
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, U. S. A.



WATER-LILIES. 1905
Private Collection



THE CATHEDRAL OF ROUEN. 1894
Louvre, Paris



VENICE. THE GRAND CANAL. 1908



BIOGRAPHY

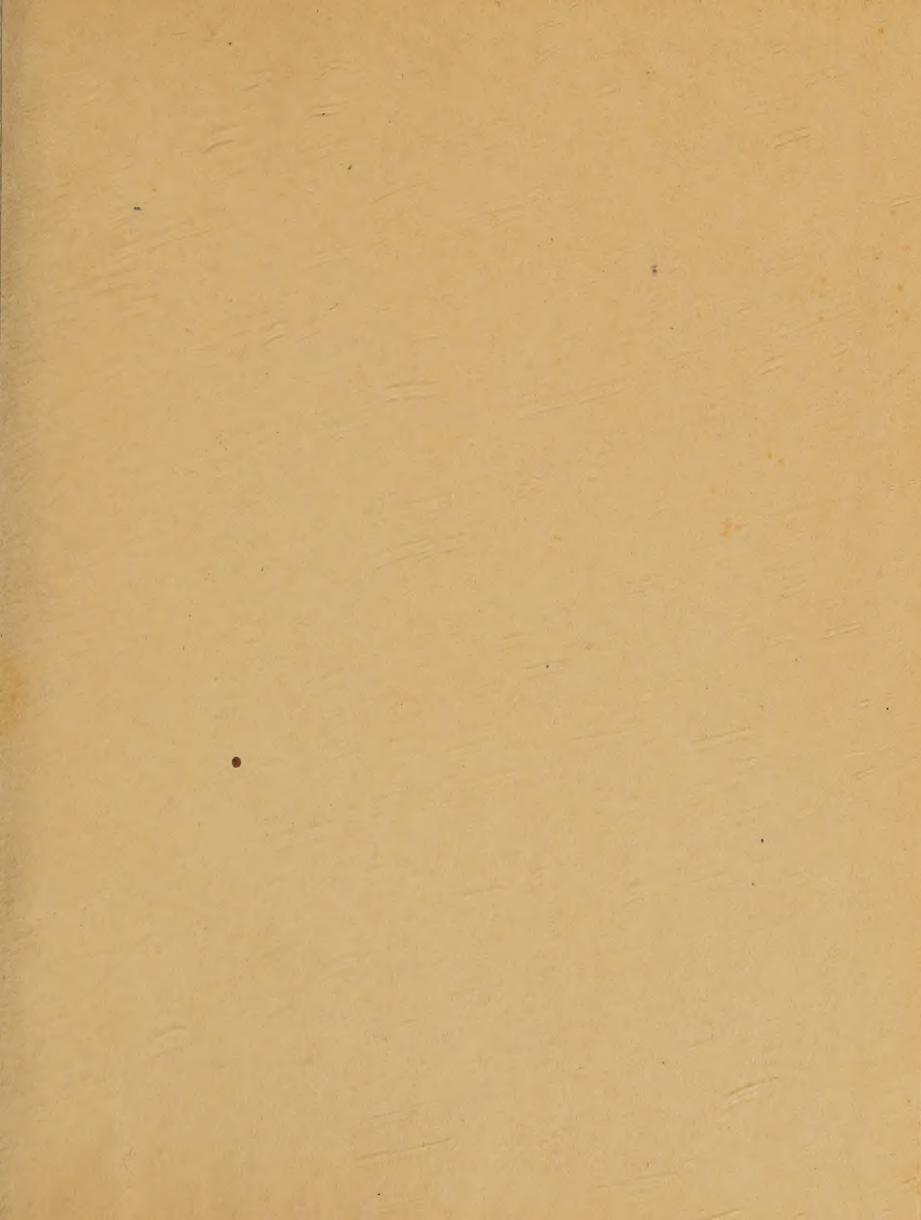
- 1840 Monet is born in Paris on November 14.
- 1859 He returns to Paris and attends the Académie Suisse where he becomes friendly with Pissaro.
- 1860-1861 He takes his military training in Algeria with the light infantry.
- 1862 He enters the Académie Gleyre in Paris.
- 1864 At Barbizon and the Forest of Fontainebleau.
- 1865 Success of one of his seascapes at the Salon. Paints "*Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*" in the Forest of Fontainebleau.
- 1866 Success at the Salon with the *Portrait of Camille* and *Women in the Garden*.
- 1868 At Etretat and at Fécamp where he attempts suicide.
- 1869 At Bougival.
- 1870 Marries Camille in June.
- 1871 Joins Pissarro in London. D'Aubigny accompanies him to Holland.
- 1872 Second trip to Holland. Upon his return he settles at Argenteuil.
- 1873 Argenteuil.
- 1874 Recognized as the leader of Impressionism.
- 1878 Settles in the village of Béthueil, keeping a small place in Paris.
- 1883 In April he settles at Giverny, near Vernon, in Normandy. Private exhibition in March.
- 1884 Bordighera, January 18 to April 3; Menton, April 8 to 13.
- 1885 At Etretat.
- 1892 Series of the *Cathedral of Rouen*.
- 1895 Trip to Norway: landscapes under the snow, nordic light.
- 1904 Exhibition of the series of views of London, Waterloo Bridge, Charing Cross, Parliament.
- 1908 Venice, where he seeks, as in London, the effects of glistening fog.
- 1909 Series of the *Water-Lilies*, begun in 1898 and recommenced after 1905.
- 1922 Operation on a cataract which enables him to recover his sight.
- 1926 Dies at Giverny on December 5.

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SPRING. Museum of Fine Arts, Lyons



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